

✓ Please replace first paragraph beginning on page 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

2 The invention relates to automatic letter processing and in particular to systems, for which an automatic address reading method is supplemented and improved by the use of video coding during the address interpretation.

Following the first paragraph beginning on page 1, please insert the following Heading:

--BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION--

✓ Please replace second paragraph beginning on page 4, with the following rewritten paragraph:

3 Since only the zip/postal code address elements can be input reliably by the operator, given the on-line delay times that are possible in practical operations, specific key components of the address components referring to the street are input during the extraction coding. The extraction coding normally is based on specially developed rules, for which a code window length is used as an access key to an address directory. For example, the Royal Mail uses an extraction formula that is based on the first three and the last two letters. In that case, the operator must memorize special rules to avoid superfluous address information and must take into account specific, differentiating characteristics, e.g. directions such as east, west or categories such as street, lane, road.

Following the first full paragraph beginning on page 6, please insert the following
Heading:

--SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--

Please delete the first paragraph on page 7.

Following the first paragraph beginning on page 7, please insert the following
Heading:

--BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES--

Please replace fifth paragraph beginning on page 7, with the following rewritten
paragraph:

Figure 1 shows a schematic representation of a letter distribution facility for implementing the method according to the invention. The OCR letter sorter 100 comprises a feeding device 110, which pulls successive goods from a magazine 111 and transports these at approximately 10 goods per second to a high-resolution video scanner 120. Following this, the goods are transported along a delay loop 121. The goods normally have address information on their surfaces. The OCR processor 130 is used for an evaluation of the address information on the images for the goods, obtained with the video scanner 120. If the evaluation is completed, a bar code printer 150 is actuated and

the item is provided with a corresponding bar code for the subsequent sorting into sorting compartments 160.

23 The OCR processor 130 comprises one or several microprocessors 131 with associated memory 132 for storing the images of the goods. The OCR processor furthermore comprises an address directory 134 with zip codes, city names and street names and possibly additional address-related information. During the evaluation of the images containing address information, a reduction, controlled by characteristics, of the entry obtained through the address directory occurs, such that a sort of partial dictionary is created. Reliability factors are associated during the individual entries, so that during the evaluation a number of data from correctly identified addresses are generated. The device furthermore contains an image controller 170, as well as a number of video coding stations 200, which are connected directly to the image controller 170 or via a local area network (LAN) 171. If the OCR evaluation of an image is not or not completely successful, this image is transferred from the OCR processor 130 to the image controller 170, which controls on the one hand the TID bar code printer 151 and, on the other hand, sends the corresponding image to one of the video coding stations 200. The TID bar code printer 151 affixes an identification code TID to the corresponding item, which makes it possible to link the evaluated address information at a later time to a physical item. In that case, the images are preferably evaluated off-line, even though an on-line evaluation through video coding is basically possible, given a sufficiently long delay time. In the latter case, the TID can also be affixed to the goods at a later point in time,

3 meaning if the video coding did not result in a complete evaluation within a predetermined, specific time interval.

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Please replace third paragraph beginning on page 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

- 20 1. The phase for data input through video coding, where a coding of certain parts of the address information takes place, preferably with a simple extraction code. During this process, the zip/postal code information as well as a larger portion of the additional address information is normally evaluated completely or the locality names are extracted if the zip/postal code is missing. A first automatic evaluation of the address information already preceded this phase.

The input is preferably shown with a divided display. In order to simplify the input, a simple extraction code is used, e.g. a 4-digit postal code, the first four alpha characters of the street name and the digits for the house numbers of the respective addresses. With this extraction coding, an adaptation to the respective postal conventions is possible without problems. For example, the number of first letters can be varied. Preferably, the operator will input the postal code only if the OCR evaluation did not show any result at all. Thus, the input of street information will apply to most of the postal goods. A structuring of the video coding preferably can also occur in that one group of operators enters the postal code and street information while another group enters street information only.

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Since a specific percentage of the mail nowadays contains post office box information, a suitable key space on the keyboard should preferably be assigned as a post office box key, which can be depressed by the operator if necessary. Following this, the post office box number is entered. With company addresses, which lack street data or post office box data, it is also possible to enter the company line.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A method for processing goods with an automatic address reading system, comprising:
- obtaining for each item an image of a surface containing the address information;
 - supplying the image to an OCR unit for the automatic evaluation device;
 - if the address information is not recognized unambiguously, transmitting the image to a video-coding station for video coding; and
 - transmitting the image of each address information that is not unambiguously recognized within a specific time interval by means of the video coding along with the information on recognized address components, obtained during the video coding, to the OCR unit for further OCR automatic evaluation for an address interpretation.